

December 11, 1945

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Dear Van;

I suppose you have read the paper by Woods and duBuy that appeared in the last issue of Science. I must confess I find it a little difficult to understand how they can state that "there is no evidence for a diffuse cytoplasmic hereditary system" or that "the development of simple non-hereditary cytoplasmic proteins into hereditary systems is entirely without experimental proof." Apparently the fellows not only do not read the literature but in addition fail to investigate the papers cited in those papers they do read. And finally they misunderstand or do not read the papers they cite, e.g. in the case of Marshak and Walker whose data could be used to explain pneumococcus transformation in terms of nuclear-cytoplasmic interchange but is, it seems to me, inadequate of Sonneborn's killer story.

It is amusing to find in a paper whose sole purpose is apparently the establishing of priority over an idea, the commission of the same error it is presumably decrying. This may teach these fellows not to publish in Phytopathology anyway.

It seems to me profitless to enter into an argument with them as to whether the cytoplasmic hereditary units are "particulate" or "diffuse", which is their main point. This would only lead into another of those interminable meaningless verbalistic discussions of which biology already has its full share.

By the way I wrote to Schneider asking him to send me his method for nucleic acids which you mentioned. We are awfully anxious to get started and would rather not wait until the November JBC comes out.

Sincerely yours,

S. Spiegelman

SS:MM